UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/292
17 March 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 17 MARCH 1999 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward herewith a letter dated 17 March 1999 from Živadin Jovanović, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, relative to the open threats of aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its build-up of troops in the neighbouring Republic of Macedonia and containing a call addressed to you by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to convene a meeting of the Security Council to prevail upon NATO and its members to cease its threats of use of force against Yugoslavia and stop a further build-up of troops (see annex).

I should be very grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 17 March 1999 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia addressed to the President of the Security Council

Referring to my letter of 1 February 1999 concerning open threats of aggression by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (S/1999/107, annex), I should like to inform you of some recent developments.

Namely, there has been a build-up by NATO countries of troops and arms, which have been brought in from other parts of Europe and the world, in the immediate neighbourhood of Yugoslavia. According to available reports, more than 10,000 NATO troops have been deployed in the neighbouring Republic of Macedonia, along with 60 tanks, 250 armoured vehicles, several dozen combat helicopters, and a great many pieces of artillery, including 155-mm long-range guns. It has been announced that NATO troops in that neighbouring country would soon increase to over 30,000. There are also reports on military reinforcements as well as the establishment of foreign military bases in other neighbouring countries, in Albania in particular.

Such a build-up of foreign troops and military equipment, unprecedented in the post-war period, has been coupled with ultimatums by the highest NATO officials and by individual NATO countries to the effect that they are ready to launch attacks against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

We would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to such troop and arms build-ups and to undisguised threats of aggression by NATO against Yugoslavia, as a sovereign and independent founding State Member of the United Nations, causing the profound concern of the Government and the people of Yugoslavia and posing a threat to peace and security in the region. This is, at the same time, a blatant and flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe prohibiting the threat or use of force in international relations. As I pointed out in my letter of 1 February, this represents a direct violation of Article 53, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations.

Also, while issuing open threats of aggression and ultimatums to Yugoslavia, senior NATO officials and those of some NATO countries, on the other hand, are maintaining contacts with, and extending assistance and support to, separatists and terrorists in the Serbian province of Kosovo and Metohija, an integral part of sovereign Serbia and Yugoslavia. These factors and countries failed to take steps and measures to cut off the channels of finance, arming, training and infiltration of arms and terrorists into the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, in breach of and ignoring the obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular its resolution 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia pursues an active and peaceful policy; it is committed to good-neighbourly relations, peace and stability in the

region. No threat is being posed from its territory, nor is it threatening the interests of any other countries, least of all the interests of NATO countries. It is determined to resolve all its internal problems by peaceful political means in compliance with international standards. This is equally true regarding a political, peaceful solution in Kosovo and Metohija within the framework of extensive self-governance and autonomy and equality for all national communities. With this approach and goal, as well as a principled and constructive attitude, our delegation is taking part in the meeting that is currently being held in Paris.

Troop and arms build-ups in the neighbourhood of Yugoslavia and open NATO threats cannot be justified on any pretext. This is surely not the way to facilitate the reaching of political agreement. However, there can be no doubt that this is the way to support the opponents of a peaceful political solution, and in particular to encourage the proponents of separatism and terrorism. In case of an attack, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will act in accordance with its legitimate right to defend itself.

I call upon you to convene a meeting of the Security Council so that this body, in line with its primary responsibility for peace and security, could urge NATO to cease its threats of use of force against Yugoslavia, to stop any further build-up of troops and arms in the region and to withdraw those already deployed, which would contribute to the reduction of tensions and elimination of unforeseen threats to peace and security in the region.

(Signed) Živadin JOVANOVIĆ